

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01

LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 SAM-01 AF-08 AGRE-00 OES-06

SAJ-01 /102 W

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R 061704Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8766

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: AZORES IMPRESSIONS

REF: (A) PONTA DELGADA 387 (DTG 091215Z SEP 76), (B) LISBON 6773
(DTG 011813Z OCT 76)

SUMMARY: EMBOFFS WHO RECENTLY VISITED AZORES ON
AID BUSINESS WERE IMPRESSED BY DECLINE IN SUPPORT
FOR INDEPENDENCE. DESPITE LINGERING SUSPICION OF
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THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND SOME TENSION WITH LISBON'S

REPRESENTATIVE IN ISLANDS, AZOREANS APPEAR COMMITTED TO MAKING A SUCCESS OF AUTONOMY. END SUMMARY.

1. BACKGROUND: AID/LISBON REP PATTERSON AND EMOBFF PARRIS VISITED PONTA DELGADA SEPT 27-OCT 1 TO DISCUSS WITH NEW AZORES REGIONAL GOVERNMENT (REFTEL) USG ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO PORTUGAL AND ITS APPLICATION TO ISLANDS. BOTH OFFICERS HAD HAD EXTENSIVE EXPOSURE TO AZOREAN POLITICS DURING PAST TWO YEARS. THEIR IMPRESSIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND CURRENT POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE IN THE AZORES FOLLOW.

2. THE NEW GOVERNMENT: THE FIRST AUTONOMOUS AZOREAN GOVERNMENT UNDER PORTUGAL'S NEW CONSTITUTION IS YOUNG (AVERAGE AGE 37) AND, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF REGIONAL PRESIDENT MOTA AMARAL, HAS LITTLE EXPERIENCE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION. ONLY ONE REGIONAL SECRETARY -- AS CABINET MEMBERS ARE CALLED -- SERVED ON THE GOVERNMENT'S IMMEDIATE INSTITUTIONAL PREDECESSOR, THE REGIONAL JUNTA. ALL MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT BELONG TO THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, (EX-POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY) WHICH POLLED 62 PERCENT IN THE JUNE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. EMOBFFS MET WITH MOTA AMARAL, FIVE REGIONAL SECRETARIES, THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE REGIONAL PLANNING DEPARTMENT, AND PORTUGAL'S MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC IN THE ISLANDS, GEN GALVAO DE FIGUEIREDO.

3. SEPARATIST FEELINGS ABSENT: EMOBFFS WERE STRONGLY IMPRESSED BY LACK OF SUPPORT OF AZOREAN INDEPENDENCE AMONG REGIONAL GOVERNMENT MEMBERS. WHEREAS IN PAST CONTACTS WITH REGIONAL JUNTA BOTH OFFICERS ENCOUNTERED FREQUENT IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT SUGGESTIONS THAT AZORES SHOULD BE INDEPENDENT, SUBJECT WAS NEVER BROACHED IN MOST RECENT TALKS. INSTEAD, ALL CABINET MEMBERS SHOWED STRONG COMMITMENT TO MAKING AUTONOMY A SUCCESS. ALTHOUGH INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBERS BETRAYED LINGERING DISTRUST OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, THEY SHOWED DISPOSITION TO ACCEPT AT FACE VALUE -- LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNTIL GIVEN REASON NOT TO -- SOARES GOVERNMENT'S EXPRESSIONS OF WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE.

4. MINISTER OF REPUBLIC: BUT IF THE AZOREAN GOVERNMENT WAS FOR THE MOMENT MORE FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD LISBON, THE SAME COULD NOT BE SAID OF LISBON'S MAN IN THE AZORES, MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC ARMY GENERAL GALVAO DE FIGUEIREDO. THE

ONLY INSTITUTIONAL LINK BETWEEN THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS, GALVAO DE FIGUEIREDO'S OFFICE HAS SO FAR FAILED TO FUNCTION AS THE CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATIONS FORESEEN BY THE CONSTITUTION. THIS HAS SERIOUSLY COMPLICATED EFFORTS TO CLARIFY THE RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS IN THE ISLANDS. FIGUEIREDO'S UNPOPULARITY AMONG AZOREANS AND WITH THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT STEMS AT LEAST PARTIALLY FROM HAVING TO FOLLOW THE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL REGIONAL JUNTA PRESIDENT, GENERAL ALTINO DE MAGALHAES. FIGUEIREDO IMPRESSED EMBOFFS AS LACKING THE POLISH AND SENSITIVITY OF HIS PREDECESSOR. THE MINISTER COMPOUNDED NATURAL AZOREAN PREJUDICES AGAINST HIM BY ARRIVING IN THE ISLANDS WITH WHAT WAS LOCALLY CONSIDERED AN EXCESSIVELY LARGE STAFF, SETTING OFF CHARGES THAT HE WAS SEEKING TO SET UP A PARALLEL GOVERNMENT. BUT FIGUEIREDO APPEARS TO BE AWARE OF HIS IMAGE PROBLEM AND TO BE TAKING STEPS TO CORRECT IT. IN MEETING WITH EMBOFFS, HE STRESSED THE NEED TO AVOID CONFRONTATION WITH THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT, AND SEVERAL OF HIS RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS WERE FAVORABLY COMMENTED UPON BY GOVERNMENT MEMBERS IN EMBOFF'S PRESENCE.

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5. COMPETENCE A QUESTION: POTENTIALLY MORE SERIOUS FOR THE AZOREAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT THAN ITS SQUABBLES WITH FIGUEIREDO IS THE QUESTIONABLE QUALIFICATIONS OF CERTAIN CABINET MEMBERS. SOME, SUCH AS PUBLIC WORKS SECRETARY JOAO PACHECO RODRIGUES, CLEARLY HAVE SOUND BACKGROUNDS IN THEIR FIELDS AND COULD IMMEDIATELY ENTER INTO DETAILED DISCUSSIONS WITH EMBOFFS ON ASSISTANCE PROPOSALS. OTHERS APPEAR TO BE IN OVER THEIR HEADS. GERMANO DOMINGOS, FOR EXAMPLE, HOLDER OF THE IMPORTANT AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES PORTFOLIO, IS A CIVIL ENGINEER AND

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HEAD OF A CONTINENTAL BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION FIRM. HE SHOWED ONLY THE MOST SUPERFICIAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE GOVERNMENT IN HIS AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY. FINANCE SECRETARY RAUL GOMES SANTOS ADMITTED TO EMBOFF THAT HIS OWN FINANCIAL BACKGROUND WAS SHAKY.

6. THE PSD LINK: THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT WAS NOT BLIND TO ITS INADEQUACIES, HOWEVER, MOTA AMARAL TOLD EMBOFFS THAT THE NATIONAL PSD'S CONSIDERABLE HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL FIELDS WOULD BE TAPPED TO BACKSTOP THE WEAKER AZOREAN SECRETARIATS. PSD FINANCIAL EXPERT SOUSA FRANCO, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS EXPECTED TO BE THE REGION'S DE FACTO FINANCE MINISTER. MOREOVER, MOTA AMARAL MADE CLEAR, UNTIL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC AND THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT IMPROVE SIGNIFICANTLY -- MUCH MORE THAN THEY ARE LIKELY TO IN THE NEAR FUTURE -- THE PSD NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS WILL BE THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT'S LIAISON OFFICE IN LISBON.

7. THE MAN IN THE STREET: HOW DID THE MAN IN THE STREET SEE THE NEW GOVERNMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP

TO THE CONTINENT? THE EXTERNAL MANIFESTATIONS OF
SEPARATIST SENTIMENT -- INDEPENDENCE TEE-SHIRTS,
FLAGS, GRAFFITI -- STILL ABOUND. CABBIES AND
WAITERS CONTINUE TO JOKE ABOUT HOW THE AZORES'
LOT WILL IMPROVE "AFTER INDEPENDENCE." BUT THE
PASSION WHICH SURROUNDED THE INDEPENDENCE
ISSUE IN THE FALL AND WINTER OF 1975 WAS
ABSENT, AZOREANS WITH WHOM EMBOFFS HAD
THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK AT ANY LENGTH SHOWED
GENUINE PRIDE IN HAVING WRUNG FROM LISBON THEIR
OWN GOVERNMENT AND HOPED THAT AUTONOMY WOULD BE
SUCCESSFUL. AS ONE AZOREAN PUT IT, "IF WE FAIL
NOW, WE HAVE ONLY OURSELVES TO BLAME."
CARLUCCI

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